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PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS UPDATE

Psychology Teachers Update is designed to give a brief overview of the main developments in the different areas of psychology. There is a proliferation of journals and research, and it is very difficult to keep abreast of the latest trends, particularly in the many and varied areas of psychology.

Each issue of Psychology Teachers Update will cover a particular topic, and summarise the main research directions and findings in the last ten to fifteen years approximately. The aim is to give teachers the feel of what is happening in that area of psychology.

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1. The Complexity of Social Influence: Social Response Context Model

Social influence is where "a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours are affected by the real or imagined presence of one or more others" (Allport 1985). It can include group pressure to conform, and persuasion and attitude change. Traditionally social influence has been characterised as conformity versus nonconformity/independence, or persuasion versus non-persuasion.

The social response context model (SRCM) (Nail et al 2000) offered a more complex understanding of social influence. The model is based upon four questions (MacDonald and Nail 2005):

a) What is the person's public position before social influence (pre-exposure, public agreement/disagreement)?

b) What is the person's private position before social influence (pre-exposure, private agreement/disagreement)?

c) What is the person's public response after social influence (post-exposure, public agreement/disagreement)?

d) What is the person's private response after social influence (post-exposure, private agreement/disagreement)?

The answers to these four questions are worked through a flow-chart to give sixteen possible responses to social influence (eg compliance, independence) (table 1.1).

1. Congruence

The individual agrees with the group (publicly and privately) before and after social influence, but there may be an increased agreement after influence.

2. Paradoxical compliance

The individual agrees (publicly and privately) before the social influence, but afterwards agrees publicly despite privately disagreeing; eg: accepting "law of streets" despite private disagreement (conformity by moving away) (MacDonald et al 2004).

NUMBER/NAME	BEFORE INFLUENCE: POSITION PUBLIC	PRIVATE	AFTER INFLUENCE: RESPONSE PUBLIC	PRIVATE
1. congruence	A	A	A	A
2. paradoxical compliance	A	A	A	D
3. anti-compliance	A	A	D	A
4. anti-conversion	A	A	D	D
5. compliance/ conversion	A	D	A	A
6. continued compliance	A	D	A	D
7. reversed anti-compliance	A	D	D	A
8. disinhibitory anti-conversion	A	D	D	D
9. disinhibitory contagion	D	A	A	A
10. reversed compliance	D	A	A	D
11. inhibitory independence	D	A	D	A
12. anti-contagion	D	A	D	D
13. conversion	D	D	A	A
14. compliance	D	D	A	D
15. paradoxical anti-compliance	D	D	D	A
16. independence	D	D	D	D

(A = agreement; D = disagreement)

(After MacDonald et al 2004; MacDonald and Nail 2005)

Table 1.1 - Sixteen responses to social influence in social response context model.

3. Anti-compliance

The individual agrees beforehand (publicly and privately), but publicly disagrees after social influence despite privately agreeing. For example, an individual publicly distancing themselves from dissimilar or disliked group which hold similar attitudes to the individual (eg: white prejudiced students and black

students; Boyanowsky and Allen 1973) (opposite of no.14). This can be seen in terms of impression management.

4. Anti-conversion

The influence of the group changes the individual away from the desired direction; eg: reaction to group's behaviour (opposite of no.13). It is a stronger desire to distance oneself from the group than no.3. This will occur when a group is exceedingly undesirable and/or holds an attitude very strongly.

5. Compliance/conversion

Publicly the individual appears not to change, but privately they are converted by the group's influence. Work on cognitive dissonance, like Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), could be an example here. In this experiment, individuals doing a boring task for no reward came to believe that the task was interesting.

6. Continued compliance

The individual does not change: publicly they continue to agree while privately disagreeing, but the strength of the attitude may change.

7. Reversed anti-compliance

The individual swaps their position from public agreement/private disagreement to public disagreement/private agreement as a reaction to the group's influence; eg: public dislike for group's position, but private agreement with arguments.

8. Disinhibitory anti-conversion

The individual becomes confident enough to express private disagreement publicly; eg: anonymous questionnaire. There are situations where individuals feel that they must give their honest view; eg: use of bogus pipeline technique (Jones and Sigall 1971) in measuring attitudes. Participants are attached to a machine measuring physiological changes, and told that the machine will know when they are not being honest.

Another example of this response is found in Monteith et al (1998). They asked students known to be

prejudiced to write an essay about gay couples, but the situation was designed to discourage negative comments. Most essays were not negative. Then the participants were asked to write another similar essay, but encouraged to express their personal views. This essay contained more negative comments.

9. Disinhibitory contagion

The individual feels unable to publicly agree before the social influence; eg: adolescent phones for date after observing friend's success (MacDonald et al 2004).

Disinhibitory contagion "occurs when an individual who is in an approach-avoidance conflict experiences a reduction in restraints as a result of observing a model" (Nail et al 2000 p457). Like privately desirable anti-social behaviour spreading through a crowd (eg: looting) (MacDonald et al 2004).

10. Reversed compliance

The individual changes their position both publicly and privately: they go from publicly disagreeing and privately agreeing to publicly agreeing and privately disagreeing.

11. Inhibitory independence (non-contagion)

The individual does not change privately and continues to publicly disagree. This response can be seen in bystander apathy. The more people present, the less likely an individual is to help in an emergency. The lack of help by others encourages the individual not to help despite privately wanting to.

12. Anti-contagion

The group's influence changes the individual's private position despite appearing not to change publicly. A behaviour done as a public distancing from the group becomes a private attitude change.

13. Conversion

A genuine change in belief (both public and private) due to the influence of the group. An example could be the informational conformity experiments where individuals conform to group norms because they simply do

not the right answer (or behaviour).

14. Compliance

This is public conformity (or normative conformity) while privately disagreeing (eg: Asch 1956): saying the same as the rest of the group to fit in while thinking something else privately.

15. Paradoxical anti-compliance

The individual is privately swayed by the group despite continuing to publicly disagree; eg: man in group of majority women.

Another example of this response is self-persuasion or "anticipatory attitude change". McFarland et al (1984) set up a persuasion experiment related to an anti-exercise message. Participants were told what to expect, but never heard the message as the tape was lost, said the experimenters. Despite not hearing the message, participants showed a private change towards the message (ie: anti-exercise), but still publicly disagreed (based on attitude questionnaire results compared to baseline measures).

16. Independence

The individual is not influenced by the group pressure, and they consistently hold the same view publicly and privately.

Social psychological experiments can show different responses under the SCRM depending upon the condition in the experiment experienced.

Feshbach (1967) used a perceptual task of guessing which of two squares contained the more dots in an Asch-like group situation. The participants were US students who were fraternity members, and responses to the incorrect answers of the group were given publicly or privately by the participants. Bogus information was also given to some fraternity members on their status within the fraternity. Three different types of social influence occurred according to MacDonald et al (2004):

i) Compliance (no.14 in SCRM) - high status fraternity members showed Asch-like conformity: public agreement to the group's wrong answer while privately knowing the correct one. They were not affected by bogus information about their status in the fraternity;

ii) Conversion (no.13) - low status members told that they were high status showed a conversion to the group's wrong answer. These individuals supported the group publicly and personally believed it was right;

iii) Paradoxical anti-compliance (no.15) - low status members given accurate information about their status showed this response. They continued to publicly disagree with the group norm while privately agreeing. The key is the need to continue to project an image of independence for these low status fraternity members.

Studies also find gender differences in the type of response to the same social influence. Prentice and Miller (1996) measured attitudes and behaviour related to alcohol consumption among first-year US college students at the beginning and at the end of the first term.

Of interest were individuals who consumed large amounts of alcohol but were not happy with such behaviour at the beginning of the term. As a generalisation, male students changed their attitude over the term while the female students did not. MacDonald et al (2004) saw the male behaviour as an example of compliance/conversion (no.5 in SCRM) and the female behaviour as continued compliance (no.6).

MacDonald et al (2004) admitted that the SCRM cannot explain all social influence (eg: identification type of conformity; Kelman 1974), nor does it distinguish between perceived intentional/unintentional attempts to influence individuals. On the positive side, the SCRM attempts to integrate the research in social psychology on persuasion and attitude change, and social influence.

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2. Social Representations and Social Knowledge

Social representations (SRs) can be seen as shared meanings. There are certain features about SRs being shared (Potter 1996):

a) SRs are generated in communication: "Social representations are the outcome of an unceasing babble and in permanent dialogue between individuals" (Moscovici 1985 p95);

b) SRs provide a code for communication: "The agreed representations provide stable visions of the world which can form a topic of conversation" (Potter 1996 p140);

c) SRs provide a way of distinguishing social groups: A group can be defined by individuals who share the same set of SRs.

Recent research has looked at how SRs fit in with social knowledge as a whole. Here are two examples of research trying to find out about this.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

SRs have two key characteristics for Moloney et al (2005):

i) "(O)nce formed a social representation comprises certain patterns of thinking, action and interaction which, when collectively concerted, create and construct a social object" (Wagner et al 1996 p332);

ii) SRs are dynamic - ie: able to accommodate contradictions. For example, media presentations about organ donation vary from stories of hope for those needing new organs to investigations of a black market trade in human organs. The notion of "consensual reality" (Rose et al 1995) allows for the historically origins of SRs to include discussion, argument, and negotiation.

The relationship between SRs and contradictions within them has been explored in recent work by Moscovici (the originator of SR theory) (eg: 1993) with the term "canonic themata" (1). The existence of contradictions are acceptable because Western cultural thinking is based on opposites (eg: black-white, up-down). Contradictions in SRs can thus be seen as interdependent variations of the same themata rather than complete differences.
In the case of organ donation, positive and negative

stories in the media are all part of a general themata rather than worrying contradictions. This leaves a co-existence for contradictory elements.

Moloney et al (2005) explored the SRs of organ donation and transplantation through a postal questionnaire in Western Australia. They found that the dimensions of "life" and "death" were central to the SRs, and SRs originated from these opposites after the first heart transplant operation in 1967. Core words were "life" and "help".

All together, Moloney et al felt that:

> (T)he role and maintenance of contradiction in the representational field leads to a consideration of a more holistic view of social thought. Such a consideration directs us away from the pervasive notion that social thinking is linear and rational to encompass the possibility that non-linear, and complex social thought defines much of our social knowledge (pp438-439).

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

"History provides us with narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from and where we should be going... A group's representation of its history will condition its sense of what it was, is, can and should be, and is thus central to the construction of its identity, norms and values" (Liu and Hilton 2005 p537).

The group's representation of its history can be called its charter. Sometimes these charters are formalised in legal documents. Charters are accepted by public opinion as true and go hand in hand with the SRs of history.

The SRs of history include "narratives of origin" which highlight the key events in history and their meaning. They are descriptions of the world containing category systems of collective experience (Moscovici 1988).

"While there is often substantial agreement on what constitutes the major events and figures of history, research has shown there is also substantial contestation over their meaning and relevance to current events" (Liu and Hilton 2005 p543).

Liu and Hilton (2005) showed how key theories in social psychology work together in the SRs of history (2).

i) Realistic group conflict theory (Sherif and Sherif 1969) - Throughout a nation's history will be conflict (literal as in wars or metaphorical), and

competition for resources. Usually the nation will perceive itself as in the right and the other nations in the wrong.

ii) Self-categorization/Social identity theory (Turner et al 1987) - SRs of history allow the managing of social identities, particularly the positioning of another group in relation to one's own group.

An individual has multiple social identities. So, say, in the case of Germany, a national identity is often linked to the events of World War II and negative associations. Individuals seek alternative social identities either at a higher level (eg: continental - European) or at a lower level (eg: regional - Bavarian). It is an attempt to deflect "collective guilt".

Doosje et al (1998) induced such guilt experimentally. Participants were assessed as high or low identifiers with their national identity, and then they were told about specific historically events either with clear blame on their nation or with ambiguous blame.

High national identifiers experienced less collective guilt than low identifiers when the historical blame was ambiguous. The high identifiers were able to employ strategies to deflect collective guilt and maintain a positive image of their nation. One strategy is to emphasise a positive characteristic of the nation that is distinct to other nations (positive distinctiveness hypothesis of the Social Identity Theory).

iii) Cognitive processes - Cognitive processes, like attribution, are involved in the SRs of history, and consequently the understanding of the future.

Hilton et al (1996) surveyed attitudes in Britain, France and Germany about European monetary union. The support for such a union was linked in different ways to the perception of the reason for Hitler's rise to power in Germany. Non-German respondents were more supportive of monetary union if they attributed Hitler's rise to power to external factors (like political events outside of Germany), while German respondents were less supportive if they made internal factor attributions about Hitler (eg: political events inside Germany).

Liu and Hilton (2005) proposed that SRs of history help understand national conflict not just as competition between groups (as in the realistic group conflict theory) or the degree of identification with one's own group (as in Social Identity Theory), but "how threat may be built into a group historical representations" (p552).

FOOTNOTES

1. I understand SRs as fitting with themata and social knowledge as in figure 2.1.

SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE (cultural worldview)

THEMATA (Key over-riding themes)

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS (of specific objects and ideas)

Figure 2.1 - Social knowledge, themata, and SRs

2. Liu and Hilton (2005) used as an example the responses of Britain, France and Germany towards the US foreign policy after September 11th 2001. In theory, all three countries had the same concern over future terrorist attacks, but they behaved differently because of SRs of their history.

Britain supported the US military response because of the SRs of "world policeman" from history; France was less supportive based upon their SRs as a "nation resistant to Anglo-Saxon world hegemony"; and Germany did not support the US. Germany's SRs of history are dominated by recent German aggression in the world wars of the twentieth century.

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3. The Relationship Between Attitudes and Behaviour: Some Recent Ideas

The inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour has been evident to social psychologists since LaPiere's (1934) classic study with the Chinese couple and hotels in the USA. The interest in explaining the inconsistency has waned in recent years (in fact since the 1970s), but current work on attitudes is highlighting some relevant issues.

ACCESSIBILITY OF ATTITUDES

Not all attitudes are held with equal strength. The strength of an attitude will be linked to its accessibility (ie: ease with which an attitude can be recalled). The accessibility of an attitude, in turn, will influence the perception of the world.

Fazio et al (2000) showed that highly accessible attitudes can limit an individual's potential to detect change in a perceptual task more so than low accessible attitudes. The attitude recalled affects perception.

The task was to report if a computer picture of a face had changed from the original. Those with low attitude accessibility relevant to the face noticed any changes quicker.

Fazio et al (1986) argued that attitudes with a strong association between the attitude object and the evaluation of the object can be triggered automatically by the mere presence of the attitude object. In other words, strong attitudes will automatically come to mind with the attitude object in a way that is "both spontaneous and inescapable".

The strength of an attitude can be seen as a continuum along the lines of attitude/non-attitude. At the non-attitude end of the continuum, individuals will answer an attitude questionnaire without ever having formed a definite attitude about an attitude object. While at the other end, the individual has a clear, strong attitude which is triggered automatically by the attitude object.

Fazio (1990) developed the idea of automatic accessibility of attitudes in his MODE model (motivation, opportunity and determinants). Motivation and opportunity determine whether spontaneous or deliberate processing occurs. In other words, whether there is consideration of the link between attitudes and behaviour depends on motivation (eg: cost of inconsistency) and opportunity

(eg: immediate decision required).

Fazio (1990) quoted a complex laboratory experiment (by Sanbonmatsu and Fazio) to show this theory at work. Participants were told about two department stores, Smith's and Brown's. Most of the information about Smith's was positive, and most about Brown's was negative. But then participants were told about the camera department in each store using the opposite criteria (ie: mostly negative about Smith's and positive about Brown's). The task was to buy a camera.

Under spontaneous processing, the participants would choose Smith's because the general information was positive, and the individual does not think about their behaviour in detail here. But under deliberate processing, Brown's would be the choice because the individual is thinking about their behaviour more (table 3.1).

	BROWN'S	SMITH'S
General information	negative	positive
Camera department	positive	negative
Type of processing in choice	deliberate	spontaneous

Table 3.1 - Deliberate and spontaneous processing.

But the experiment also varied the motivation (had to explain decision to group or not) and opportunity (make immediate decision or time for reflection). Only in the condition which allowed deliberate processing did participants choose Brown's store to buy their camera (table 3.2).

	CONDITION 1	CONDITION 2
Motivation	high	low
Opportunity	reflection	immediate decision
Type of processing	deliberate	spontaneous
Decision	Brown's	Smith's

High motivation = explain decision to group; low = no explanation for decision

Table 3. 2 - Different conditions in the experiment by Sanbonmatsu and Fazio.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ATTITUDES

Individuals may express an attitude publicly that is different to their privately-held one.

MacDonald and Nail (2005) defined private attitudes as attitudes "that are consciously recognizable, controllable, and that the attitude holder believes are not directly accessible to anyone other than him or herself", while public attitudes are "made with the belief that one or more other people are able to learn of that expression and attribute it to the attitude holder" (p17).

Expression of views takes place in front of supportive, unsupportive or unknown audiences whose opinion may be valued, not valued, or disdained (MacDonald and Nail 2005). The fear of exclusion, particularly when an audience's opinion is valued, is a powerful motivator in public expressions of beliefs.

Studies in the public-private distinction have realised the problems in measuring the private side because the presence of a researcher exerts social influence: "Thus, social influence researchers, in many cases, may have misapplied the label of 'private' attitudes to participants who have modified reports of their attitudes because of an experiment's evaluation. As a result, some researchers have potentially drawn incorrect conclusions about the nature of public attitudes and the ways they differ from privately held attitudes" (MacDonald and Nail 2005 p17).

The only way to gain access to private attitudes is through complete anonymity. In their questionnaire research, MacDonald and Nail (2005) secured the feeling of complete anonymity by:

- Seating the participants far apart and not facing each other;

- Having the researcher faced away from the participants;

- Getting the participants to place their questionnaires in unidentifiable sealed envelopes placed randomly in a pile.

MacDonald and Nail involved sixty-two Australian students in research about their personal habits. The "private condition" emphasised that the researcher would not see their anonymous answers, while in the "public condition", the participants were told that "the researcher may need to look at your answers" (p21). In this independent design experiment, participants filled in a number of different questionnaires, but the main

focus was the response to embarrassing questions (eg: frequency of bowel movements). The researchers expected more socially desirable answers in the "public condition".

The most important measure was the rating of the study as important. This was taken as evidence of social desirability as the questionnaire about personal habits was relatively pointless. The rating of the study's importance was higher in the "public condition", and particularly for two personality types:

a) Individuals high in public self-focus (mean of 6.3 out of 8 for importance versus 5.7 for low public self-focus individuals). Public self-focus relates to presenting the self to others, and high scorers are concerned with a good presentation. This is measured by the Public Self-Focus Scale (Fenigstein et al 1975) (eg: "I'm concerned about what other people think of me");

b) Individuals low in defensive self-presentation (mean 6.4 versus 5.6). Defensive self-presentation is a variation on self-monitoring (Snyder 1974), and relates to avoiding social rejection. Low scorers work hard not to be rejected (ie: behave as others want them to). The Defensive Self-Presentation Scale (Lennox 1988) contains items like "At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like".

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES

Along similar lines to the automatic activation of attitudes is the distinction between explicit and implicit attitudes (Wilson et al 2000). Explicit attitudes are those that an individual expresses and is aware of, while implicit attitudes are automatic (and often outside of conscious awareness).

One commonly used way of measuring the latter is the Implicit Association Test (IAT) (Greenwald et al 1998).

This is a computer-based test using response times to pressing certain keys when words appear on the screen. Pairs of words (which contrast like dog and spider) are presented on the screen, and the task is to press a right side key for dog or pleasant words and a left side key for spider or unpleasant words. The keys are then changed, so that right is for dog or unpleasant and left for spider and pleasant, and the same words are presented again.

If the participant is slower in their reaction time in the second version (ie: spider/pleasant and dog/unpleasant) compared to the first version, this is taken as evidence of an implicit positive attitude

towards dogs relative to spiders. There are issues about the validity of this method, the existence of separate attitude systems, and whether IAT can predict specific behaviours (Perugini 2005).

Measuring implicit attitudes also has two other problems (MacDonald et al 2005):

a) The scales used have low reliability compared to explicit attitude scales;

b) The context in which the attitude object is perceived can influence the implicit attitude in tests like the IAT.

How do explicit and implicit attitudes relate together and to behaviour? There are three possible models (Perugini 2005):

i) Additive - implicit and explicit attitudes added together predict behaviour;

ii) Double dissociation - implicit attitudes predict spontaneous behaviour and explicit attitudes predict deliberate behaviour;

iii) Multiplicative - implicit and explicit attitudes interact together to predict behaviour.

Perugini (2005) performed two separate experiments to test implicit and explicit attitudes and behaviour.

Experiment 1

This involved measuring implicit and explicit attitudes towards smoking among twenty-five smokers and twenty-three non-smokers at the University of Essex. Explicit attitudes towards smoking and exercise were measured by a semantic differential scale containing eleven pairs of adjectives (eg: bad-good, calming-stressful, glamorous-ugly).

Implicit attitudes were measured by the IAT (using five steps - three being practice ones). In the first experimental step, the left key was used for words related to smoking (eg: ashtray, lighter) or pleasant (eg: rainbow, smile), and the right key for exercise (run, swim) or unpleasant (eg: pain, vomit) related words (figure 3.1).

In the final step, the right and left keys were switched. The IAT was calculated by taking the difference in reaction times between the two experimental steps, and the score showed an implicit positive attitude towards

smoking compared to exercise.

Smokers had both more positive implicit and explicit attitudes towards smoking than non-smokers. But only explicit attitudes predicted whether the individual was a smoker or not (behaviour). This was especially true for non-smokers.

SMOKING RELATED WORDS press "q"	EXERCISE RELATED WORDS press "p"
PLEASANT ASSOCIATED WORDS press "z"	UNPLEASANT ASSOCIATED WORDS press "m"

Figure 3.1 - How computer screen looked in first experimental version of the IAT.

Experiment 2

This focused upon eating snacks or fruit with 109 students. The method followed that of experiment 1, but also included a self-reported behaviour measure of how often individuals ate these two types of foods. Participants could also choose a snack or fruit as they left the experiment.

Implicit attitudes seemed to predict spontaneous behaviour like on-the-spot choice of snack or fruit and not deliberate behaviour, while explicit attitudes the opposite.

Research has found that implicit attitudes are only related weakly, if at all, to explicit or conscious attitudes towards the same attitude object in some cases; eg: prejudice. Here there is a situation called "aversive racism" (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986): individuals express conscious non-prejudiced attitudes but show implicit prejudiced attitudes. This is not hypocrisy. Individuals are expressing their "honest" views explicitly, but the automatic association is negative. It could be seen as similar to the conscious/unconscious distinction in psychodynamics.

A study by Son Hing et al (2002) is typical of the

current experiments of implicit attitudes as applied to "aversive racism". Two groups of students were used - "aversive racists" (explicit egalitarian attitudes but implicit racist attitudes), and "low prejudiced" (both explicit and implicit egalitarian attitudes).

In a scenario about student union funding, the participants were asked to recommend funding cuts for different student associations (the relevant one here was the Asian students association). The "aversive racists" recommended greater cuts than the other group. This was the baseline condition of the experiment.

The two groups of students were then divided equally into two conditions involving writing an essay in favour of egalitarian issues. Afterwards, the students were again asked about funding cuts to student associations. But half the participants were in the "hypocrisy condition". Immediately after the essay, this involved them thinking about times in their lives when they had not lived up to their egalitarian beliefs. The "aversive racists" in this condition reported more guilt than other participants, and subsequently they recommended less budget cuts to the Asian students association compared to their baseline. The "low prejudiced" students were not affected by the "hypocrisy condition". Figure 3.2 gives an example of the structure of this experiment.

BASELINE CONDITION	"aversive racist" students (AR)		"low prejudiced students (LP)	
	↓		↓	
	-100		-10	
EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION	"hypocrisy condition"		control condition	
	AR	LP	AR	LP
	↓		↓	
	guilt	↓	no guilt	↓
	↓		↓	
	-50	-10	-100	-10

Figure 3.2 - Structure of the Son Hing et al (2002) experiment and recommendations of budget cuts to the Asian students association.

HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR

One reason that attitudes do not predict behaviour is because some behaviour is habitual.

Habits are "learned sequences of actions that have

become automatic responses to situations" (Sheeran et al 2005). A traditional Behaviourist view sees habits as frequently reinforced behaviour in a particular situation.

A recent understanding of habits (cognitive-motivational view) focuses upon the goal as the cause of the automatic behaviour to achieve that goal (Aarts and Dijksterhuis 2000). For example, the goal of getting dressed in the morning activates the habitual behaviour involved in that process.

It is possible that environmental features can trigger goals which in turn trigger habitual behaviour outside of conscious awareness (Bargh 1990; auto-motive model).

An experiment to support this idea comes from Bargh et al (2001). Participants performed a word-search task, which for half of them contained achievement-related words (eg: "succeed"). These words were the environmental trigger. Then there was a second task of word puzzles.

Those participants in the first task who received the achievement-related trigger performed better on the second task, and reported no conscious awareness of deliberately trying harder (figure 3.3).

ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGER	→	GOAL TRIGGER	→	HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR
Achievement-related words in word-search	→	achievement	→	work harder in word puzzles

Figure 3.3 - Auto-motive model of habitual behaviour.

Sheeran et al (2005) investigated this relationship in alcohol drinking behaviour among UK university students. The environmental trigger is socialising which leads to the goal trigger of readiness to drink and the habit is alcohol consumption (figure 3.4).

ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGER	→	GOAL TRIGGER	→	HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR
questionnaire about socialising	→	readiness to drink as measured by response time to alcohol-related words	→	drinking behaviour

Figure 3.4 - Triggers in Sheeran et al (2005).

The mean response time to alcohol-related words was much quicker (568 ms) in habitual drinkers than non-habitual ones (877 ms). "Participants' readiness to drink was greatest when both a goal related to drinking was active and participants possessed relatively strong drinking habits" (Sheeran et al 2005 p53).

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

Much of the research on attitudes and behaviour uses correlations between them, but correlations do not establish causation. Predictive models called expectancy-value models estimate the probabilities of possible actions and attempt to establish causation.

A number of this type of model have been developed to build a more detailed picture of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. One of the best known is the theory of reasoned action and later, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Fishbein and Azjen 1975; Ajzen 1988; Ajzen 1991).

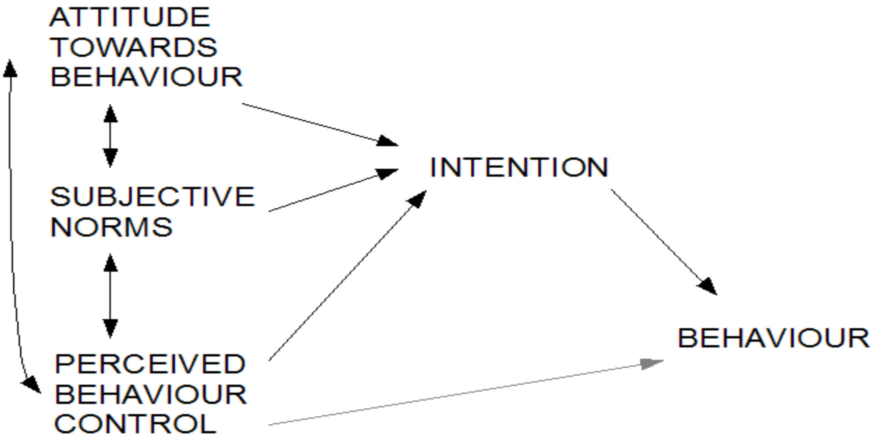
The key variable is intention to do the behaviour which will predict the actual behaviour, and attitudes play a part in the intention.

This model has three components which make up intention (figure 3.5):

a) Attitude towards behaviour;

b) Subjective norms (ie: what individual believes others want);

c) Perceived behavioural control (ie: ability to do the behaviour).



(After Potter 1996)

Figure 3.5 - Theory of planned behaviour.

Developments in the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Studies using this model have found that the three factors for behaviour intention do not explain all variance in behaviour, and a "substantial proportion of the variance" remains unexplained (Hagger and Chatzisarantis 2005).

One possibility is that the three factors need to be sub-divided into, for example, affective and instrumental attitudes (Ajzen and Driver 1991), injunctive and descriptive norms (Rivis and Sheeran 2003), and perceived control and self-efficacy (Terry and O'Leary 1995).

The sub-division of "attitude toward behaviour" into affective and instrumental attitudes attempts to overcome the criticism that the TPB focuses too much on cognition at the expense of affect (Bagozzi et al 2001).

But are affective and instrumental attitudes sub-divisions of the global construct of "attitude toward behaviour" or independent constructs that influence "behaviour intention"?

"Subjective norms" could be sub-divided into perceptions of normative influence of behaviour approved by others (injunctive norms; ought), and influence of behaviour performed by others (descriptive norms; is) (Hagger and Chatzisarantis 2005). The latter is separate because it relates to the perception of whether a behaviour is appropriate in a particular situation rather than the general belief of the appropriateness of the behaviour (injunctive norms). Are these separate influences on "behaviour intention" or part of the global construct, "subjective norms"?

"Perceived behaviour control" is also faced with the same question of sub-division in terms of perceived controllability, and self-efficacy (an individual's situation-specific self-confidence for doing the behaviour) (Hagger and Chatzisarantis 2005).

Ajzen (2002) attempted to address these proposed sub-divisions of factors in the TPB.

Hagger and Chatzisarantis (2005), using data on exercise and dieting behaviours, applied complex statistical modelling to the two possibilities in figure 3.6. The findings supported version (A). But the authors accepted that the sub-divided factors do help to show the complexity of factors related to "behaviour intention".

Kraft et al (2005) explored "perceived behaviour control" as consisting of three separate factors using Norwegian student data on exercise intention and

recycling intention. The three factors were:

i) Perceived control - how much control the individual feels they have over performing the behaviour;

ii) Perceived confidence - how confident the individual feels that they can perform the behaviour;

iii) Perceived difficulty - the perceived barriers to performing the behaviour.

Version A:

AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE → ATTITUDE TOWARD BEHAVIOUR →
INSTRUMENTAL ATTITUDE →

INJUNCTIVE NORMS → SUBJECTIVE NORMS → BEHAVIOUR INTENTION
DESCRIPTIVE NORMS →

PERCEIVED CONTROLLABILITY → PERCEIVED BEHAVIOUR CONTROL →
SELF-EFFICACY →

Version B:

AFFECTIVE ATTITUDES →

INSTRUMENTAL ATTITUDES →

INJUNCTIVE NORMS →

DESCRIPTIVE NORMS → BEHAVIOUR INTENTION

PERCEIVED CONTROLLABILITY →

SELF-EFFICACY →

Figure 3.6 - Two possibilities for the sub-division of factors in the TPB.

So applied to the intention to jog each day - "I can do it before work in the mornings" (perceived control); "I am not sure I will be in the mood every morning" (perceived confidence); and "There is nowhere nice to jog near here" (perceived difficulty).

Kraft et al found that "perceived confidence" was a strong predictor of exercise intention but not recycling intention, and "perceived control" was the opposite. However, overall, the research supported the idea of "perceived behaviour control" as consisting of two factors (perceived controllability and self-efficacy).

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4. Social Cognition: Three Examples of Recent Research

Social cognition is the name given to the processes used to make sense of the social world. It is an expansion, in the last twenty years, on the early research of processes like attribution and impression formation. Social cognition includes these processes and much more (eg: schemas and prototypes).

Here are three examples of recent research in social cognition.

IMPRESSION FORMATION AND ANXIETY

The impression formed on meeting a new person can be based on individual characteristics of that individual (which are noticed) or upon their group membership (stereotyping). As to which process is at work depends upon motivation, personal relevance, and emotions (affect).

One example of an affect is anxiety. Anxiety can influence impression formation in two ways:

i) Lead to more negative impressions of others (eg: affect-priming - Bower 1991; affect-as-information - Schwartz and Clore 1983). Because of their anxiety, individuals are primed to notice certain things about the person (ie: information that fits their mood eg: threatened);

ii) Form more stereotyped impressions (eg: anxiety-assimilation hypothesis - Wilder and Shapiro 1989; Fiske and Morling 1996). This occurs because anxiety hinders memory ability, and stereotypes are easily accessible memories.

Research into these two theoretical positions needs the presence of anxiety in participants. Field studies, like Baron et al (1992), used natural occurring anxiety. Baron et al performed their experiment on patients in a dental waiting room. Participants were asked to estimate how often stereotypical words appeared in a list related to librarians, flight attendants, and waitresses. The more anxiety (self-rated) the participant, the more likely they were to overestimate the number of stereotypical words in the list (suggesting greater awareness of stereotypes). This study supports (ii) above.

Laboratory experiments, like Curtis and Locke (2005), involved deliberate manipulating levels of

anxiety during the study. This study used sixty-nine students from Australia and their impression of Australian Aborigines. Half the participants were made anxious by a task of solving impossible anagrams and the threat of public embarrassment at their low scores.

Participants were shown a photograph of a 30-year-old male Australian Aborigine, and had to response to twenty sentences (eg: "some people on the street are frightened of him"). The participants in the anxiety-induced condition gave significantly higher ratings for threatening traits (4.62 vs 4.16 out of 7), and (non-significantly) lower ratings for non-threatening ones (4.62 vs 4.86) than control participants.

Curtis and Locke (2005) performed their experiment again in the University of Western Australia's dental surgery waiting room. They found that anxious patients (as self-reported) responded to the photograph of the male Australian Aborigine as significantly more threatening (mean 4.70) than the low anxiety patients (mean 3.70). There was no difference in responses to non-threatening words. These two experiments support (i) above.

STEREOTYPE THREAT THEORY

Stereotypes held about individuals, particularly negative ones, can influence behaviour. Stereotype threat theory (Steele 1997) was proposed to explain the situation where groups with negative stereotypes in education, say, under-perform and prove the stereotypes correct. The most common examples are female students and pupils' poor performance in maths tests, and general poor academic performance by Black students and pupils.

Put simply, the fear of the negative stereotype (eg: low academic ability) makes the individual anxious in the test situation, and their performance is then poor, and this confirms the negative stereotype.

The threat of the negative stereotype is what is important here. Marx and Goff (2005) more formally defined stereotype threat as "knowing that one may be evaluated in accordance with the negative stereotypes held about one's group" (p646). Behind stereotype threat is awareness of group membership.

The threat of the negative stereotype has been reduced in different studies, and then the participants show no decline in performance:

i) Telling participants that the test does not measure ability (eg: Steele and Aronson 1995). This research presented Stanford University students with the same test either as an intellectual ability diagnostic

test or as "just a lab exercise". In the former condition, mean scores for Black students were half that of White, but, in the latter condition, there was little difference;

ii) Telling participants that the test does not show gender or ethnic differences (eg: Spencer et al 1999). Participants were told that their maths test was designed to either show gender differences or not. Where the participants were told there was a difference, female performance was worse than male, but not in the other condition;

iii) Changing the meaning of the test (eg: Stone et al 1999): from a test of "athletic intelligence" to one of "athletic ability".

Another variable in stereotype threat is the administrator of the test (usually male, and White). Marx and Goff (2005) tested the effect of a Black experimenter on verbal test performance with twenty-nine Black and twenty-one White Harvard University undergraduate students. The researchers created the stereotype threat condition in two ways - asking participants to write their ethnic origin at the beginning of the test booklet, and telling them that the test was very accurate at measuring ability.

The Black participants given the test by a Black experimenter performed significantly better than those given the test by a White experimenter. Black participants also did significantly worse than White participants when a White experimenter was involved. The stereotype threat at work was that Black students are less intelligent than White students (despite being at Harvard, a prestigious US university).

The White participants' performance did not vary between conditions because the stereotype threat does not affect them (table 4.1). The difference in scores was not due to answering less questions in the allocated time, it was a decrease in verbal test accuracy.

	EXPERIMENTER ETHNICITY	
PARTICIPANT ETHNICITY	BLACK	WHITE
BLACK	12.08 (a)	(a) 9.80 (b)
WHITE	12.39 (c)	(c) 13.16 (b)

(After Marx and Goff 2005)

(a) vs (a) = significant at p<0.05; (b) vs (b) significant at p<0.01; (c) vs (c) = not significant

Table 4.1 - Mean adjusted verbal test performance scores.

Stereotype threat was measured by questions like "I worry that if I perform poorly on this test, the experimenter will attribute my poor performance to my race". Black participants showed a higher stereotype threat score with a White than Black experimenter (3.48 vs 2.30), and than White participants (1.49 vs 1.76 respectively).

Evaluation of Marx and Goff (2005)

a) The actual experiment was carried out by four Black and three White undergraduate research assistants who were blind to the hypothesis.

b) The impression of competency for the experimenters was created by telling the participants that the experimenters had created the verbal test. The participants were also asked to rate the competency of the experimenter they experienced.

c) Baseline measures of participants' ability came from verbal SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) scores used in the US education system. A minimum score of 610 was required as well as participation in at least one English or literature course in college.

d) There was no comparison group using a test that participants were told did not measure ability (non-diagnostic condition).

Another way to reduce the stereotype threat is though the presence of a positive stereotype. Marx et al (2002) compared female students' performance in a maths test in a stereotype threat condition when they heard about a highly maths-talented woman versus an average talent. In the former condition, the students' test performance did not decline.

ATTRIBUTION AND PERSONALITY: MORE COMPLEX THAN FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR

The observation of an individual's behaviour leads to an attribution of the cause of that behaviour, and an attribution of the personality of that individual (figure 4.1).

```
INDIVIDUAL SEEN   →     ATTRIBUTION    →   DISPOSITIONAL
TO GIVE MONEY          OF KIND ACT         ATTRIBUTION
TO CHARITY                                 = KIND PERSON
```

Figure 1 - Attribution process.

The process, however, is not an objective calculation of dispositional (personality) or situational attribution.

The fundamental attribution error (FAE) (Ross 1977) overestimates the impact of the actor's disposition in behaviour. But there are times when the FAE holds true, and times when it does not. This is known as the weaker interpretation (Brown et al 2005).

Experiments have found that the FAE is only applied in certain situations where it is expected rather than generally. For example, Trafimow (1998) told participants that a certain individual was either kind or unkind at work and at home. The participants were then told about the individual performing congruent or incongruent behaviour. If the original story was about the individual being kind at work, participants did not generalise that the individual would be kind at home, for example. The FAE would expect the generalisation of an attribution.

The FAE does not hold in every situation because of a number of factors that influence attribution.

Reeder and Brewer (1979) made the distinction between "partially restrictive trait dimensions" (PRTD) and "hierarchically restrictive trait dimensions" (HRTD) in the process of attribution of personality. This is how we decide on the person or a stranger based on limited examples of their behaviour that we know about.

With PRTD, an individual who is seen to be helpful, for example, will be assumed to do helpful things most of the time. An occasional lapse will not change the perception of helpfulness. The same is true for unhelpful individuals, an occasional helpful act will not change the unhelpful perception.

With HRTD, positive and negative behaviours are viewed differently. An individual assumed to be helpful cannot do even one unhelpful act or else the whole perception changes. While an individual who is perceived as unhelpful can do helpful acts, and this will not change the perception of them. Negative behaviour is attributed as a negative characteristic in a way not applied to positive behaviour. In other words, an unhelpful act tells us that the person is unhelpful, but this does not work for helpful acts (figure 4.2).

The question is which behaviours and characteristics are partially restrictive (eg: unfriendly) and which are hierarchically restrictive (eg: dishonest) (Brown et al 2005).

Brown et al (2005) set out to test extreme situations where negative behaviour will not be attributed as a personality characteristic (eg: lying to save a life).

Partially restrictive trait dimension

BEHAVIOUR		ATTRIBUTION
helpful and occasionally unhelpful	→	helpful person
unhelpful and occasionally helpful	→	unhelpful person

Hierarchically restrictive trait dimension

BEHAVIOUR		ATTRIBUTION
helpful person, one unhelpful act	→	unhelpful person
inhelpful person, one helpful act	→	unhelpful person

Figure 4.2 - PRTD and HRTD.

In the first set of experiments, participants heard about an individual who was dishonest or disloyal for one of five reasons: to save another's life; to save their own life; to gain financially; to avoid losing financially; or for fun (control condition). The individual used was called Joe, and an example of a scenario read, "Joes was dishonest to a friend to gain a million dollars".

After reading the scenario, the 105 students from New Mexico State University, had to rate Joe for his dishonesty or disloyalty to another friend (-3 to +3) (general measure), and on other traits. The condition involving saving a life (own or other) led to no generalisation of the negative behaviour to another situation (table 4.2).

"How dishonest (disloyal) would Joe be to another friend?"

+3 "extremely honest"	-1 "somewhat dishonest"
+2 "quite honest"	-2 "quite dishonest"
+1 "somewhat honest"	-3 "extremely dishonest"
0 neutral	

CONDITION	DISHONESTY SCORE	DISLOYALTY SCORE
For fun	-1.11	-1.11
To gain 1m dollars	-1.56	-1.57
To avoid losing 1m	-0.60	-0.75
To save own life	1.18	-0.13
To save another's life	0.73	0.75

(A minus number = generalising of negative behaviour to another situation)

(After Brown et al 2005)

Table 4.2 - Mean generalisations of dishonesty/disloyalty in five conditions.

Only in highly atypical situations do participants not generalise negative behaviour as characteristic of the actor. A further experiment by Brown et al (2005) found that lying to save own life can be viewed negatively compared to lying to save someone else's life. There are times when situational factors are used in attribution (which challenges the FAE), and when negative behaviour (which is perceived as moral) is not generalised (which challenges the HRTD) (figure 4.3).

SITUATION		ATTRIBUTION		TYPE OF ATTRIBUTION
lies to gain money	→	dishonest person	→	dispositional; irrelevant of any past good behaviour
lies to save another person	→	not necessarily dishonest person	→	situational; attribution of personality will depend upon past behaviour; eg: lying in other situations

Figure 4.3 - Situational attribution of behaviour in certain circumstances.

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5. The BBC Prison Study

INTRODUCTION

The Stanford Prison Simulation (SPS) (Haney, Banks & Zimbardo 1973) is famous in the history of social psychology for showing that ordinary college students can behave very differently if given roles as prisoners or guards. The latter showing increasing brutality. The extremity of the results meant it was felt that such research was ethically unacceptable.

Unlike other social psychological research, there were not replications to confirm the results (except a partial replication in Australia; Lovibond et al 1979). Reicher and Haslam (2006) argued that the conclusions from the SPS "have become almost inviolate", despite certain problems. In particular, the fact that only parts of the study were filmed, and what was filmed could be interpreted in different ways.

The SPS researchers felt that the power of the roles determined the prisoners' and guards' behaviour. But Zimbardo (quoted in Reicher and Haslam 2006), himself, admitted that both prisoners and guards challenged their roles throughout the study.

In the Lovibond et al study, the guards were encouraged to treat the prisoners with respect and as individuals. There was less aggressive behaviour by the guards compared to the SPS.

PROCEDURE

In December 2001, Haslam and Reicher (2002) set up a field study similar to the SPS which appeared on the BBC as "The Experiment" in May 2002, and became known as the "BBC prison study".

Over eight days, fifteen men were studied as they acted out prisoners and guards in a specially-built environment at Elstree Film Studios in North London. It was not meant to be an exact replication of the SPS.

Ethical issues were very important and a number of safeguards were built into the study including detailed screening of potential participants; comprehensive informed consent; and paramedics on constant standby throughout the study. An independent ethics committee reviewed the study and felt the ethical conduct was "exemplary" (McDermott et al 2005 quoted in Reicher and Haslam 2006).

Participants were selected from adverts in the national press, and the final sample represented a

diversity of age, social class, and ethnicity. The fifteen participants were divided into groups of three, and one of those was randomly chosen to be the guard. The guards were not given any direct instructions about their behaviour other than that physical violence was not to be used. The offer of promotion from prisoner to guard was available until Day 3, though it was not used by the researchers.

FINDINGS

The most important finding was that the guards failed to identify with each other as a group while the prisoners did, and they worked together against the guards. But the prisoners only started to identify as a group after Day 3. Before that they behaved as individuals attempting to gain promotion.

Social identification was measured on a seven-point scale using items like "I feel strong ties with the prisoners (guards)". This scale was used every day. On Day 1, the average score between prisoners and guards was very similar (0.5). By Day 5, the guards' score had not changed, but the prisoners' average was two (a significant difference).

The shared social identity of the prisoners manifest itself in challenges to the guards - minor (eg: insubordination during roll call) and major (eg: collective protest about the quality of the food). Compliance was measured on Days 1, 3 and 5 with two items: "I try to do what the guards want" and "I try to comply with the guards' rules". The scores nearly halved between Day 1 and Day 5 for the prisoners.

The prisoners became more confident in their ability to challenge the guards, and the guards became less confident in their ability to maintain order (measured as "collective self-efficacy"). Depression ratings, taken every day, declined for the prisoners, but increased for the guards.

As the guards struggled to maintain order, they did show increasing right-wing authoritarian views. In other words, as their group failed, they were attracted to more authoritarian ideas (in a small way), based on items like "What we need are strong leaders that the people can trust".

Table 5.1 summarises the main trends of the results for prisoners and guards.

	DAY 1	DAY 6
Social identification with group		
Guards	0.6	0.6
Prisoners	0.5	2.0
Compliance with prison rules		
Guards	5.5	5.5 (Day 5)
Prisoners	5.0	3.0
Collective self-efficacy		
Guards	(Day 2) 5.5	5.0
Prisoners	(Day 2) 5.0	5.5
Depression		
Guards	1.5	2.2
Prisoners	2.0	1.5

(After Reicher and Haslam 2006)

Table 5.1 - Approximate mean scores on various measures for prisoners and guards.

The study moved into a second phase on Day 7 after the complete breakdown of guard power. A decision was made by all the participants to become a single self-governing commune. This failed within a day, and there was an attempted return to guards and prisoners, but with some participants changing their roles. The researchers felt the study was gridlocked and stopped it at noon on Day 8 (instead of Day 10 as originally planned).

EVALUATION

Reicher and Haslam (2006) addressed four critiques of their study:

i) The role of television - The participants knew that the BBC was filming and this influenced their behaviour.

The authors accept that this may account partly for the behaviour, but the study does highlight the fact that surveillance (of some form) is part of everyday life: "Of course, the size and variety of audiences to which one is made accountable by television is much larger than we commonly experience" (p26).

ii) The role of personality - The behaviour observed was a product of the individuals rather than the group processes or the situation. So the prisoners overcame the guards because the former were strong personalities and the latter weak ones.

Reicher and Haslam pointed out that the choice of guards was random from groups of matched individuals.

Furthermore, the rebellious behaviour only started

to appear after Day 3; eg: prisoner "JE" "before the promotion, he invested his energies in supporting the system and it was only after promotion was ruled out that he put them into undermining the system. Therefore, it is one thing to call him 'forceful', but to explain how that force was directed, we need to invoke systematic factors" (p27) and not personality factors. Personality again only accounts partly for the behaviour in the study.

iii) The reality of inequality and power - The study failed to produce real inequalities and power between the group. This is a critique of the internal validity of the study.

But, Reicher and Haslam said, the prisoners genuinely disliked their subordinate status in terms of being locked up, the food, and the lack of cigarettes. While the guards had better quality and amount of food and drink, and superior living conditions. The prisoners wore T-shirts, loose trousers and flimsy sandals, and the guards had well-made uniforms. The participants did engage with the situation as if real.

iv) The impact of the interventions and key variables - The study contained experimental flaws. For example, one prisoner was added to the study later.

No study is perfect, Reicher and Haslam accepted, but they feel that multiple data sources (filming, and tests before, during and after the study) allowed good measurement of the participants' behaviour. Furthermore, they call the study an "experimental case study", which means that it is not claimed to be completely rigorous as in a full experiment.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion of the study was that different factors determine whether individuals identify with a social role and it is not automatic as assumed by the SPS.

Furthermore, the behaviour associated with a social role is not automatic either:

> Thus, although the role of guard was positively valued in the immediate context of the prison, those assigned to this position were concerned with the positive or negative evaluations by future audiences, and hence some of them were relevant to identifying with the role
> (Reicher and Haslam 2006 p30).

So there is a wider social context to behaviour than

the immediate situation.

Where individuals do commit extreme behaviours (eg: genocide of minority groups), it is a wider social support as well as the immediate factors that produce that behaviour. This fits with the emphasis of social constructionism to explain behaviour. For example, the torture of inmates by US troops at Abu Ghriab prison, Iraq in 2004 was influenced at two levels: the "local audience" (the soldiers involved), and the "wider audience" (US soldiers generally, and even US society).

Another finding of the BBC prison study was that the failure or breakdown of a group creates a climate where authoritarian ideology "appears more seductive":

> Thus, whereas in the SPE, the failure of the prisoners allowed an existing tyranny to be consolidated, in the BBC study, the failure of the commune paved the way for the emergence of a new tyranny (Reicher and Haslam 2006 p34).

Finally, Reicher and Haslam argued that it is possible to do studies like this and the SPS without too many ethical concerns.

COMPARISON WITH SPS

In terms of the findings, Reicher and Haslam (2006) reported a similarity and a difference with the SPS. The similarity was that "an understanding of collective conflict and tyranny cannot be achieved simply by looking at individuals but requires an analysis of group processes and intergroup relations" (p33).

The difference was that individual's behaviour is not automatically determined by social roles as SPS showed. Thus "the results of the BBC prison study suggest that the way in which members of strong groups behave depends upon the norms and values associated with specific social identity and may be either anti- or pro-social.." (p33).

Table 5.2 compares the BBC prison study and SPS in terms of similarities and differences.

BBC PRISON STUDY		STANFORD PRISON SIMULATION
	Similarities	
	1. Male participants	
15	2. Small number of participants	22
	3. Participants recruited from newspaper adverts	
	4. Participants extensively psychologically tested beforehand	
Elstree film studios North London	5. Used purpose-built "prison"	Building 420, Psychology Dept, University of Stanford, California
	6. Participants knew taking part in experiment	
8 of 10 days	7. Study stopped early	6 of 14 days
prisoner "DM"	8. Prisoner added after study started	prisoner 416 replaced prisoner 819
	9. Guards wore uniforms	
	Differences	
Experimental case study	1. Type of study	Simulation study
Completely by BBC	2. Filmed	Partly by CCTV
Cross-section of age, social class and ethnicity	3. Participants	Randomly recruited, mainly college students
England 2001	4. Where and when	USA early 1970s
Guards told to draw up own rules to run institution	5. Briefing to guards	Explicit control over prisoners eg: "They'll have no freedom of action, they can do nothing, say nothing that we (guards) don't permit" (quoted in Reicher and Haslam 2006)

	BBC PRISON STUDY	STANFORD PRISON SIMULATION
6. Funding of study	BBC?	US Navy
7. Reason study stopped	Gridlock between participants over how to run prison	Cruelty by guards
8. How prisoners came to prison	By themselves	Arrested at home by police
9. Prisoners' emotions	Decreasing depression and increasing confidence as study progressed	Passive and negative emotions
10. Cells	Three-person	Single
11. Measures used during study	Physiological (eg: cortisol in saliva for stress) and psychometric tests every day	None
12. Aim of study	"to create an institution that in many ways resembled a prison.. to investigate the behaviour of groups.." (Reicher and Haslam 2006)	To simulate prison
13. Guards' behaviour	Weak enforcement of rules	Cruel enforcement of rules and humiliation of prisoners for fun
14. Theory used	Based on social identity theory, for example	Exploratory study
15. Researchers	Steve Reicher and Alexander Haslam	Philip Zimbardo, Carl Haney and Carl Banks

Table 5.2 - Similarities and differences between the SPS and the BBC prison study.

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6. Two Aspects of Relationships

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN FRIENDSHIPS

Triandis et al (1988) proposed differences in friendships based on the collectivist-individualist distinction (1). Individuals from collectivist cultures develop more intimate and longer-lasting friendships with few people compared to individualistic cultures (table 6.1).

	COLLECTIVIST	INDIVIDUALIST
Intimacy	more	less
Number of friends	few	many
Longevity of relationships	long	short
Exclusivity of friends	high	low
Frequency of interactions	more	less

Table 6.1 - Characteristics of friendships in collectivist and individualist cultures.

French et al (2006) tested the Triandis et al hypothesis on three groups of college students: US (n = 61) (individualist culture), Indonesian (n = 56), and South Korean (n = 35) (both collectivist cultures) (2).

Friendship behaviours were measured in three ways:

i) Social Network Inventory - Two week diary of contacts;

ii) Modified Friendship Quality Questionnaire (M-FQQ) (Parker and Asher 1993) - 42-item questionnaire; eg: "We tell each other things that we would not tell other people". It was completed for two same-sex non-kin relationships;

iii) Rochester Interaction Inventory (RII) - 14 day diary of quality of interactions.

The results were divided into three sets: friendship quality (eg: disclosure, longevity); structural aspects of friendship (eg: exclusivity); and structural aspects of total interactions.

Overall, the South Korean students' friendships were consistent with Triandis et al for collectivist cultures, but not the Indonesian students. The main individual results are as follows:

a) Intimate disclosure - South Korean students

showed the most intimate disclosures on the RII (mean score of 4.99 out of 7), followed by US students (3.54), and Indonesian students last (3.24). But the South Korean and US students scored similarly on the perception of disclosure as measured by the M-FQQ:

b) Length of relationships (longevity) - South Korean friendships had lasted an average of 4.78 years, 3.96 for US students, and 2.97 for Indonesian students;

c) Exclusivity (friends having few other friends) - South Korean students had significantly more exclusivity than the other two groups on the M-FQQ;

d) Total interactions per day - Indonesian students has significantly more interactions per day (mean 9.69) than US (4.23) and South Korean students (3.68) as measured by the Social Network Inventory.

The authors concluded that there is a "need to expand conceptions of friendship in collectivist cultures to include a variant in which extensive involvement with a collective group is emphasised and involvement in specific dyad relationships is de-emphasised" (French et al 2006 p78).

Evaluation of French et al (2006) study

i) Though Indonesia and South Korea are both collectivist cultures, they are historically different countries, and other research suggested different friendship behaviours (eg: Noesjirwan 1978).

ii) The students were from different types of institutions. The US participants came from "a highly selective liberal arts college" in Illinois, the Indonesians from Padjadjwan University in Bandung (a "comprehensive public university"), and the South Koreans from Yonsei University in Seoul ("considered the second most prestigious in South Korea"). Table 6.2 lists other variables about the students.

But college populations are comparable across countries more than other populations (French et al 2006).

iii) "Friend" was defined using four levels (table 6.3). The terms may not mean the same thing. For example, the Korean term "maeu chinhan chingu" means a level of intimacy beyond "close friend" in English (French et al 2006).

iv) The reliability of the exclusivity scale of the M-FQQ was only 0.52 - 0.61 (French et al 2006). The rule of thumb is a reliability of 0.75 at least is desirable (Coolican 1990).

v) Small sample sizes in all three countries.

	US	SOUTH KOREA	INDONESIA
How recruited	- Introductory psychology students	- Electronic bulletin board	- Academic clubs
Ethnicity	- 93% Euro-American	- not detailed	- most from Java
Mean age	- 19.5 years	- 22.0	- 21.1
Where lived	- Campus accommodation	- 3/4 with families; 1/4 rooming houses	- boarding houses; with families
Payment	- Research experience credit and 10 dollars	- 30 US dollars	- 10 US dollars
Gender	- 30 male/31 female	- 18 male/17 female	- 27 male/29 female

Table 6.2 - Characteristics of students in three countries.

LEVEL OF FRIENDSHIP	ENGLISH	INDONESIAN	KOREAN
1 & 2	close/ extremely close	orang terdekat/ sahabat	maeu chinhan chingu/ chinhan chingu
3	friends that not close	teman	dul chinhan chingu
4	acquaint -ances	kenalan	anum saram

Table 6.3 - Definitions of "friend" used

SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF ROMANTIC LOVE

There are many "scientific" definitions of romantic or partnership love, but "no one knows quite what it is" (Sternberg and Grajek 1984). Thus the emphasis recently on the subjective experience of love.

This type of research was first performed by Lee (1977) to devise his love styles - primary (eros, ludus, and storge) and secondary (mania, agape, and pragma). Lee produced 1500 cards, each containing a brief description of a love related aspect. In the "love story card sort", participants chose the cards that best described their experiences.

Other research on the subjective experience of love emphasised the holistic nature of the event (ie: a single "love story" narrative), yet a vast number of possibilities to these stories (eg: Sternberg 1995). Sternberg's collection of over 100 "love stories" from students were categorised into twenty-four types (eg: love as war" - relationships as battles).

More recently, Watts and Stenner (2005) have used Q Methodology to study love with fifty British participants (average age 33 years old). The researchers produced sixty statements about love (eg: "A feeling of excitement" or "An urge over which we have little control"), which were sorted on a twelve-point scale ranging from "most descriptive" to "most undescriptive". The results were then factor analysed to give the following eight factors of the subjective experience of romantic love:

Factor A - Mutual trust, recognition and support (+) - cupid's arrow (-): The (+) side of this bipolar factor sees love as "a continual shared effort of mutual recognition and understanding". While the (-) side sees love as an irrational force.

Factor B - Hedonistic love: This is love as a superficial experience rooted in physical attraction.

Factor C - Demytholigized love: This is a realistic view which is critical of "romantic myths". Love is more messy and difficult than portrayed by romance stories.

Factor D - Love as ultimate connection and profound feeling: Love is a profound feeling that is essential for living a complete and fulfilled life.

Factor E - Love as transformative adventure: Here love is seen as a business with risks, but with great potential benefits.

Factor F - From cupid's arrow to role-bound relationships: Though love is irrational, it requires work by the partners to "get right".

Factor G - From cupid's arrow to friendship: Love strikes with power, but the intensity quickly diminishes.

Factor H - Dyadic-partnership love: Love is a partnership of two individuals as one.

Table 6.4 gives examples of statements that are typical of each type of love.

FACTOR	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS
A+	- Attempting to always understand
	- A desire to assist your partner in achieving their full potential
A-	- Continually damaging to rational thought processes
	- Initially so intense that it is difficult to discern and maintain one's own perspective
B	- Rooted in physical attraction
	- A pleasant "addiction" to the company of your partner
C	- Shaped in each of us by our cultural upbringing
	- An extension of everyday friendship
D	- The ultimate way-of-relating to another person
	- The most profound of human feelings
E	- A strong respect for your partner
	- A profound belief in the value and goodness of your partner
F	- A feeling of excitement
	- Potentially demanding of personal time and resources
G	- An ongoing process
	- A strong respect for your partner
H	- The moulding of two persons into a single functional unit
	- Equally the responsibility of both partners

Table 6.4 - Examples of statements associated with each factor (type of love).

Watts and Stenner then placed factors A-E in relation to the dimensions: mundane-transcendental, and concerned with commitment-not concerned (figure 6.1).

```
                        CONCERNED WITH
                        COMMITMENT
                              |
          A+                  |    D
                              |
                              |
                              |
                              |          E
                              |
                              |
MUNDANE  _____________________|__________________  TRANSCENDENTAL
                              |
                              |
                        C     |    B         A-
                              |
                              |
                        NOT CONCERNED
                        WITH COMMITMENT
```

(After Watts and Stenner 2005)

Figure 6.1 - Factors A-E on two dimensions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Individualism-collectivism is a distinction used by Hofstede (1980). In individualistic cultures (eg: Western Europe), the emphasis is upon the individual and personal choices. Collectivist cultures (eg: South East Asia) focus upon the individual's group (eg: family) as the basis of identity and achievement.

2. Hofstede (1983) ranked the USA as no.1 on the individualism-collectivism classification (with a low number being individualistic), South Korea as no.44 and Indonesia as no.47.

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7. Aspects of the Self: Public and Private

In terms of evolution, "Only in human beings do we see deliberate efforts to convey a public image to other people, an image that may or may not mesh with the individual's private view of him- or herself" (Leary 2001 p457).

The distinction between public and private aspects of the self can be seen in the history of social psychology. Theorists like Cooley, Mead, and Rogers focused on the private, subjective self, while Goffman was an example of interest in the social, public self (Leary 2001). More recent interest is in the relationship between the public and private aspects of the self (eg: Baumeister 1986).

Three possible relationships can be distinguished between the two aspects of the self (figure 7.1):

i) Public and private separate - The individual shows their public self, and keeps the private self hidden unless they choose to share it through self-disclosure. A good example of this idea is Goffman's (1959) analogy of the theatre: the stage is the public self and backstage is the private self;

ii) Public and private overlap - The individual has less control over the private self, and aspects of it "leak out" in behaviour or through non-verbal communication;

iii) Public = private - The public and private self are the same. This would be best seen in social constructionism.

The public self refers to the image that an individual gives to others, what the individual thinks about that image, and how others receive that image (Leary 2001).

The sociometer theory (eg: Leary and Baumeister 2000) proposes that individuals possess a psychological mechanism called a sociometer that monitors how others are receiving the individual. If the individual notices that they are not well received, then they can change their behaviour (public self) to restore their value.

Importantly, self-esteem is the indicator of the degree to which an individual is valued by others.

Leary (2001) described two types of self-esteem in this sense:

a) State self-esteem - feelings about the self at that moment;

b) Trait self-esteem - the general level of self-esteem across time and situations. Individuals low in

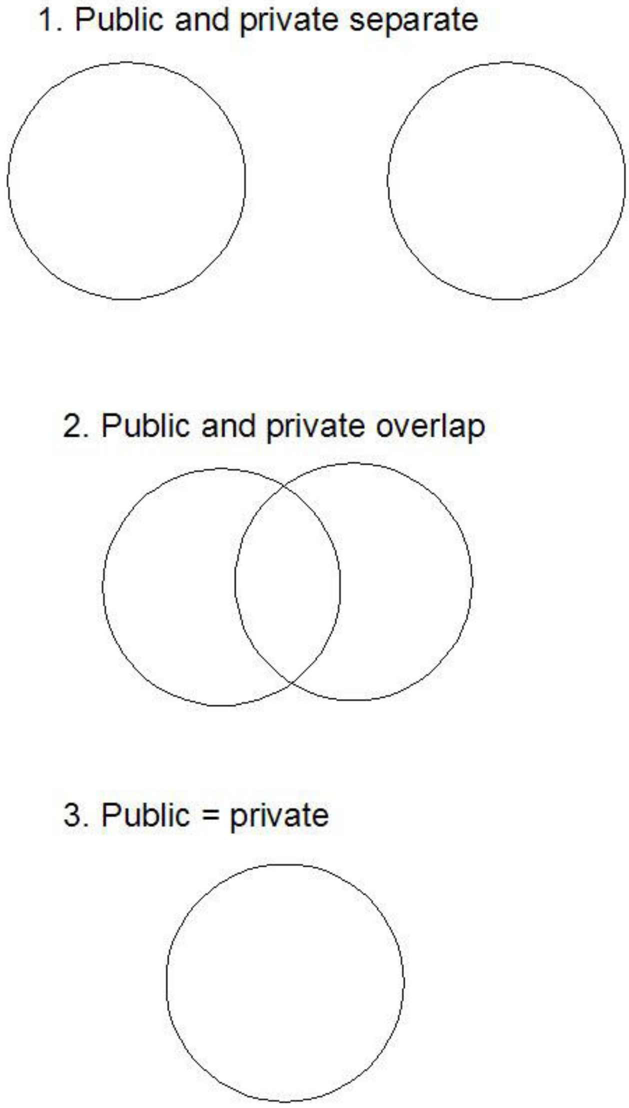

Figure 7.1 - Three possible relationships for the public self and the private self.

this type of self-esteem feel insecure, and "may settle for a neutral or minimally acceptable image that will at least insure that they will not be rejected and that might even promote acceptance.." (Leary 2001 p466).

SELF-ESTEEM: DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

It is assumed that individuals are motivated to maintain a positive evaluation of themselves, known as the "self-esteem motive" (Leary 2001). Greenwald (1980)

compared it to a totalitarian government that suppresses information and controls the image presented, thus the "totalitarian ego" which makes sure that a positive evaluation of the self predominates.

A high self-esteem is important: "a favourable opinion of oneself as the central psychological source from which all manner of positive outcomes spring" (Baumeister et al 2005 p70). In fact, in the USA, raising self-esteem has been seen as the solution to problems from reducing crime to balancing the Californian state budget (Baumeister et al 2005). In other words, it is low self-esteem that is the foundation of many problems.

Baumeister et al (2003) argued, in their review of the evidence, that high self-esteem does not correlate with positive outcomes in certain areas of life and low self-esteem with negative outcomes.

Baumeister et al (2005) selected key areas to challenge the assumptions about self-esteem:

i) Education - The assumption here is that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance. Large scale US studies, like Pottenbaum et al (1986 quoted in Baumeister et al 2005) with 23 000 high school students do not find such a relationship. The correlation between self-esteem in the tenth grade and educational achievement in the twelfth grade was only +0.1.

ii) Relationships - It is believed that those with high self-esteem do better in relationships; for example, by being more popular.

Baumeister et al (2005) quoted three studies to challenge this idea:

a) Dierner and Wolsic (1995) showed that high self-esteem and physical attractiveness were not related. Participants were photographed and their self-esteem was measured. Then judges had to rate the physical attractiveness of the photographs of unadorned faces. There was no relationship between the rating of attractiveness and the level of self-esteem, but participants with high self-esteem did rate themselves as attractive;

b) Bishop and Inderbitzen-Nolan (1995) asked over five hundred US ninth-grade students to nominate their most-liked and least-liked peers. The results were combined to give a ranking of popularity. There was no relationship between level of popularity and self-rating of self-esteem;

c) Buhrmeister et al (1988) found that college students with high self-esteem self-rated their interpersonal skills higher than those individuals with low self-esteem, but this relationship was not supported by ratings of roommates in four of five skills. The only area where self-esteem did relate to an interpersonal skill (both self-reported and roommate-reported) was ability to initiate new relationships. Thus those with high self-esteem are more confident in starting new relationships. The other areas of interpersonal skills studied were managing conflict, providing emotional support, disclosing information about the self, and asserting oneself in response to objectionable behaviour by others.

iii) Teenage problem behaviour - Low self-esteem is often quoted as the cause (or key factor involved) of many problems in the teenage years. Baumeister et al (2005) felt that "no categorical statements can be made" in relationship to low self-esteem and earlier sexual activity, and alcohol and drug use. Nor is low self-esteem linked to aggressive behaviour, argued Baumeister (2001).

Narcissistic individuals (ie: extremely high self-esteem) were found to be more aggressive in competitive games: such individuals try to "defeat someone who has threatened their highly favourable view of themselves" (Bushman and Baumeister 1999).

Baumeister et al (2005) highlighted two areas where high self-esteem do show a benefit:

a) Individuals with high self-esteem are significantly happier (as in life satisfaction rating), and less likely to be depressed;

b) High self-esteem improves persistence in the face of failure.

Baumeister et al (2005) concluded that they "have found little to indicate that indiscriminately promoting self-esteem in today's children or adults, just for being themselves, offer society any compensatory benefits beyond the seductive pleasure it brings to those engaged in the exercise" (p77).

SELF-MONITORING

Self-monitoring is an individual's sensitivity to situational norms (Snyder 1974). High self-monitors are concerned with fitting in with the situation and so

express attitudes and perform behaviour that will achieve this aim. Low self-monitors are less concerned about this, and more about being consistently themselves.

Klein et al (2004) investigated self-monitoring and the expression of prejudice publicly. Initially, 89 heterosexual US undergraduates filled in the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder 1974) (1) and a measure of attitudes towards homosexuality. Three weeks later, they took part in a group discussion on "homosexual marriage" either in a group portrayed as favourable (tolerant-audience condition) or unfavourable (prejudice-audience condition) towards homosexuality. There was also a control group who filled in the questionnaires alone again.

Overall, "the higher the level of self-monitoring, the more likely communicators were to express attitudes consistent with those of their anticipated audiences" (Klein et al 2005 p310).

High self-monitors were found to express more prejudice in the prejudice-audience condition, and less in the tolerant-audience condition than their original questionnaire scores filled in alone. Low self-monitors tended not to be influenced by the audience.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SELF

Self-ratings of our own abilities are not necessarily an accurate predictor of actual performance (eg: correlations of 0.2 - 0.3 for intelligence), and, in fact, individuals are more accurate at predicting another's performance (Dunning et al 2005). In the main, individuals overrate themselves.

For example, in a survey, in US high schools, of leadership skills, 70% of respondents claimed to be above-average and only 25% below-average (Gilovich 1991).

Overrating also occurs in predicting that work will be completed quicker than it actually takes ("planning fallacy"); eg: students take three weeks longer than their predicted to finish essays (Buehler and Laurier 1994 quoted in Dunning et al 2005).

Socio-cognitive biases are involved in these examples:

a) Above-average effects - Because individuals only have a limited amount of information available to make a decision, they use their own standard as the criteria of judgment.

For example, in a word test, the individual is asked to think of as many words as possible with "x" as the second letter. They are able to think of twenty, which

seems good to them, so they rate themselves highly. In reality, there are hundreds of such words in a dictionary, but the individual does not have all the information available. Where all the information is available, often some is neglected compared to others.

b) Overprediction of desirable events - This is seen in unrealistic optimism, for example, in relation to health risks. In this case, individuals always underrate their risk of health problems.

Renner et al (2000) asked participants to estimate their own and an average peer's risk of cardiovascular diseases. All the age groups rated their own risk below-average. For example, 31-40 year olds gave a mean absolute risk judgment of -0.54 for themselves and -0.17 for the average peer, where the average risk is zero.

Self-Deception

Self-deception is the ability to deceive ourselves in the same way that we can deceive others. Whether that means there is a split in the private self between a part that knows the truth and part that does not is open to dispute (Leary 2001).

Mele (1997) preferred to see self-deception in terms of specific thinking processes:

i) Negative misinterpretation - The desire for something to be true leads to a downplaying or ignoring of negative information. For example, a person who believes that they are a good golfer will explain their poor scores as due to external causes (like bad luck) rather than the lack of golfing skill;

ii) Positive misinterpretation - This is the tendency to interpret negative information as positive support for the desire. A man asks a woman for a date, but she refuses saying she is not interested in him. He interprets this rejection (negative information) as a strategy by her (eg: "playing hard to get"), and as a sign that he must work harder to get her. Thus no does not actually mean no when he wants something to be true;

iii) Selective focusing/attending - This is focusing on what is desirable and away from the undesirable;

iv) Selective evidence-gathering - This is a "combination of 'hyper-sensitivity' to evidence.. for the desired state of affairs and 'blindness' - of which there are, of course, degrees - to contrary evidence.." (Mele 1997).

It is easy to say that surely the individuals know their beliefs are wrong and they are just pretending. But the point of self-deception is that individuals genuinely believe what they believe (Brewer 2006).

According to evolutionary theory, self-deception evolved as a subtler form of deceiving others (Trivers 1985). It is so much better to deceive others if you believe something yourself.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AS SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

Self-disclosure was first defined in psychology by Sidney Jourard as "the process of making the self known to others" (Jourard and Lasakow 1958 p91). It is seen as a key part of intimate relationships.

Antaki et al (2005) were critical of self-disclosure as studied mainly in experiments in social psychology. The focus has usually been on three aspects:

i) Self-disclosure is operationalised as a set of statements in a questionnaire;
ii) It is a dependent variable caused by certain factors like the degree of intimacy;
iii) It is an independent variable which causes other behaviour, like the effectiveness of therapy.

Antaki et al preferred to study self-disclosure as social performance using techniques of conversational analysis. For them, self-disclosure as social performance must have three design features:

a) "Designing information as a report of personal information" - The report of some relevant information "owned" by the discloser which is "newsworthy". For example, when one person expresses a dislike for violent television programmes, the other person agrees by saying how they turn the television off in such situations;

b) "Designing information to sound significant in the circumstances" - In conversations, individuals may use "extreme case formulations" to emphasise the significance of the information (eg: "I'm an absolute chocolate fan" or "I'm the world's worst cook").
For Antaki et al, it is not the subject matter that is significant (eg: admitting to being pregnant) because talk is indexical. This means that the significance of the disclosure will depend upon the interaction;

c) "Designing information as volunteered" - The speaker shows that they are giving information over and

above what is expected, and because they choose to do so. Giving a large amount of personal information in the Catholic confessional or in a courtroom are not self-disclosure by this definition because the personal information is expected.

Overall, self-disclosure is seen as a product of that particular social interaction rather than as an objective behaviour performed or not depending on the "depth of confession". Self-disclosure is a "situated interactional practice".

SOCIAL COMPARISON AND THE SELF

Academic Comparison

Highly successful students who leave one academic setting for a more advanced one often experience a decline in their academic self-concept. This has been called the "big fish in a little pond" to the "little fish in a big pond" effect (Davis 1966). They key to this effect is social comparison. In the first setting, the individual compares well to others (and thus boosts their self-esteem), but in the latter, they compare less favourably (and thus the decline in the self-concept).

The "little fish in a big pond" effect produces the feeling of inferiority due to an unfavourable upward social comparison. This comparison to highly skilled peers can lead to lower perceived control over educational success and reduced optimism about improvement (Leach et al 2003 quoted in Burleson et al 2005).

But there is research that the "little fish" effect can have a favourable effect - namely, to inspire individuals who have a strong motivation to improve. Key is identifying with highly successful others and believing they are similar to ourselves (Collins 1996).

Burleson et al (2005) tested these two possible effects of upward social comparison at a six-week summer school in the USA in 2001 for high school "artists" (aged 13-18 years). Of the 513 students attending, 141 were studied in detail from various fields of art (visual arts, creative writing, theatre, music, dance, and film). Three sets of data were collected:

i) Pre-programme questionnaires two weeks before the summer school began;

ii) A diary-type measure in week 1 of the summer school;

iii) Post-programme questionnaire at the end of the course.

The questionnaires included the Social Comparison Style Questionnaire (Leach et al 2003 quoted in Burleson et al 2005) which measured both positive and negative responses to upward social comparison on a Likert scale (-3 to +3). A positive item would be: "Learning that another is better than me tells me how I might also improve in the future", and a negative example: "Learning that another person is better than I am makes me feel inadequate".

Generally there was no decline in "artistic self-concept" between the pre-programme and the week 1 measures. Any positive or negative changes occurred during the programme (between week 1 and the post-programme measures).

The "pre-existing comparison tendencies played almost no role in their self-concept change. Rather, only the social comparisons they reported making during the programme were associated with change in their self-concept" (pp120-121). Social comparison is "context-sensitive".

Happiness

Choice is the word of our age, whether it be in traditional ones like consumer goods, or less traditional areas like education. Work by Barry Schwartz (2004a) has found that increased choice leads to increased unhappiness because individuals are always comparing their decision with something better.

Schwartz et al (2002) developed the Maxmization Scale to measure an individual's response to choice. There are thirteen items rated on a seven-point Likert scale. Items include: "Whenever I'm faced with a choice, I try to imagine what all the other possibilities are, even ones that aren't present at the moment"; "I never settle for second best"; and "No matter how satisfied I am with my job, it's only right for me to be on the lookout for better opportunities".

Based on thousands of respondents to the Maxmization Scale patterns appeared. Around one-third of respondents scored an average rating of 4.75 or higher (with 10% scoring greater than 5.5).

At the other end of the scale, one-third of respondents averaged 3.25 or less per question (with 10% below 2.5 average). The high scorers are known as "maximizers" ("those who always aim to make the best possible choice"), and low scorers are "satisficers" ("those who aim for 'good enough', whether or not better selections might be out there") (Schwartz 2004b).

"Maximizers" tended to be less happy because, not

only do they spend a lot of time assessing the choices before a decision, they continue to think about the alternatives afterwards. "When they compare themselves with others, they get little pleasure from finding out what they did better and substantial dissatisfaction from finding out what they did worse" (Schwartz 2004b p46).

"Maximizers" are also more likely to have "high regret sensitivity" (ie: prone to regret after decisions) (Schwartz 2004b). Regret is made worse by the number of choices available, high expectations, and high adaptation (getting used to things quickly). In both of the latter cases, life can never live up to what we think it will. This is made worse by advertising and hype in Western society.

Taken further, Schwartz (2004b) saw "maximizers" as prone to depression:

> If the experience of disappointment is relentless, if virtually every choice you make fails to live up to expectations and aspirations, and if you consistently take personal responsibility for the disappointments, then the trivial looms larger and larger, and the conclusion that you cannot do anything right becomes devastating (p49).

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY AND 9/11

In Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al 1997), individuals overcome their fear of mortality by embracing their culture's worldview. This also produces a feeling of high self-esteem.

Thus when individuals are reminded of their mortality, it will cause them to embrace their culture's worldview with greater strength.

Pyszczynski et al (2003) applied this behaviour in Terror Management Theory to the reaction in the USA after 9/11 (the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11th September 2001). After such an event, there is a need to restore "our sense of value in a world of meaning".

Terror Management Theory predicts two types of reaction to mortality salience (increased awareness of mortality): proximal ("attempts to push thoughts of one's own mortality from consciousness") and distal (attempts to reduce vague death thoughts).

Pyszczynski et al (2003) gave examples of these two types of reactions after 9/11:

i) Proximal reactions

a) "It can't happen here" - simple disbelief;

b) "Driven to distraction" - diverting activities like drinking, gambling, and shopping, which all increased in the three months of 2001 (more than expected);

c) "Curling up like an armadillo" - avoiding behaviour that is perceived as risky; eg: not flying or joining large crowds;

d) "The undermining of freedom" - increased security measures to create the "illusion of safety" from future attacks;

ii) Distal reactions

a) "Intensifying the quest for meaning and value" - for example, increased church attendance and sale of Bibles after 9/11;

b) "Intensifying patriotism and nationalistic sentiment" - a definite embracing of cultural values; eg: increased sale of US flags;

c) "Suppressing dissent" - "when thoughts of death are salient, people generally become less tolerant and more hostile toward those with diverging views" (p103). If individuals question their own beliefs, this will reduce the security gained from cultural worldviews, and so it is easier to criticise other views;

d) "Intensifying bigotry" - increased prejudice as a result of (c), but not necessarily with any logic. For example, an Indian Sikh was shot in Arizona soon after 9/11 simply because he was "foreign";

e) "Intensifying altruistic tendencies" - "To manage their terror effectively, people want to fulfil their roles as valued contributors to their worldview" (p108). In other words, an increase in positive behaviour towards the ingroup, like increased blood donation in late September 2001;

f) "Increasing the need for heroes" - "reminders of mortality increase the tendency to admire and reward those who heroically uphold and exemplify cultural values" (p109).

Though individuals in the USA showed these similar reactions to 9/11, Pyszczcnski et al (2003) pointed out that there will be individual differences in reaction:

"people respond to the heightened salience of that which they fear by working harder to live up to the standards of value to which they are committed" (p107). For example, many individuals showed increased tolerance of others after 9/11, and some church-leaders called for understanding of Islam.

FOOTNOTE

1. Self-monitoring was originally perceived as a single behaviour, but others have questioned this. For example, Lennox (1988) developed two subscales to the Self-Monitoring Scale:

i) The active pursuit of social status (eg: "I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people");

ii) Defensive self-presentation measuring avoidance of social rejection (eg: "At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like"; negative item).

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